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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/542,400

07/15/2005

Yasuji Yasumitsu

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07/17/2007

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EXAMINER

SALVATORE, LYNDA

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1771

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

07/17/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/542,400

Applicant(s)

YASUMITSU ET AL.

Examiner

Lynda M. Salvatore

Art Unit

1771

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 March 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's amendment and accompanying remarks filed 3/28/07 have been fully considered and entered. Claim 1 has been amended and new claims 2-4 have been added as requested. Applicant's amendment to claim 1 is found sufficient to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph set forth in section 2 of the Office Action dated 12/28/06. As such, this rejection is hereby withdrawn. Applicant's amendments are not found patently distinguishable over the prior art made of record and Applicant's arguments are not found persuasive of patentability for reasons set forth herein below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

2. Claim 1 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Amundson et al, WO 00/38565.

Applicant amended claim 1 to recite conjugate fibers. Applicant argues that the amended claims requires PET/PE conjugate fibers. In response to the conjugate fiber limitation, it is respectfully pointed out that Amundson et al., teach that the polyethylene and polypropylene fibers in each layer can be bicomponent fibers (page 5, 5-15). With regard to Applicant's assertion that the amended claim requires PET/PE conjugate fibers it is respectfully pointed that no such limitations exist in independent claim 1. Thus, Applicant's assertion is not commensurate in scope with the claimed subject matter.

The published PCT application issued to Amundson et al., teach a composite laminate comprising two outer polyethylene layers bonded to an inner polypropylene layer (page 2, 5). Said inner polypropylene layer may also comprise a blend of synthetic and natural fibers (page 2, 25). Amundson et al., teach a coform ratio blend of synthetic to pulp fibers ranging from 50:50 (page 5, 30 and page 6, 1). With regard to the basis weight limitations, Admundson et al., teach layers having a basis weight ranging from 25-120 g/m² (page 10, 30). Also, Admundson et al., teach basis weights of the individual layers (outer/inner/outer) of 10/80/10 g/m² respectively (page 11, 5). Such a composite would inherently meet the total basis weight limitations recited. With regard to the heat bonded limitations, Admundson et al., teach attaching the individual layers by a thermo-mechanical process (e.g., heated rollers) (page 10, 10). It is the position of the Examiner that such heating would inherently impart heat bonding of the synthetic fibers.

Although, the prior art of Admundson et al., fails to teach the claimed ratio of the lengthwise and crosswise direction strength, the ratio of the strength in a dry state to that of a wet state and the water absorption properties, it is reasonable to presume that the combination of recited properties are inherent to the Admundson et al., composite. Support for said presumption is found in the use of like materials such as synthetic and natural pulp fibers and the use of like processes such as forming a multi-layer composite having the claimed basis weight ranges, which would result in the claimed strength and absorption properties. Applicant is invited to prove otherwise. *In re Fitzgerald* 205 USPQ 594

In addition, the presently claimed combination of strength and absorption properties would obviously have been present once the Admundson et al., composite is provided. *In re Best*, 195 USPQ at 433, footnote 4 (CCPA 1977).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 2-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Amundson et al., WO 00/38565 in view of Schmidt et al., US 6,278,037.

The published PCT application issued to Amundson et al., teach bicomponent fibers, but fails to teach the claimed bicomponent fibers. However, such fibers are commonly known in the disposable garment art. For example, the patent issued to Schmidt et al., teach an absorbent article comprising polypropylene/polyester or polyethylene/polyester having a length ranging from .3-7.5 cm and a fineness ranging from .4-20 dtex (column 11, 19-38). Schmidt et al., specifically teach that such fibers provide thermal bonding due to the low melting sheath component (column 11, 5-20).

Therefore, motivated by the desire to provide a composite article having thermal bonding abilities it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the composite article of Amundson et al., with the bicomponent fibers taught by Schmidt et al.

Conclusion

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Lynda M. Salvatore whose telephone number is 571-272-1482. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrel Morris can be reached on 571-272-1478. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 1771

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

June 25th, 2007

Is

Sandra S. Williams
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1771